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CEREMONIES

AT THE

Laying of the Corner Stone

OF THE

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AMERICAN MUSEUM

OF

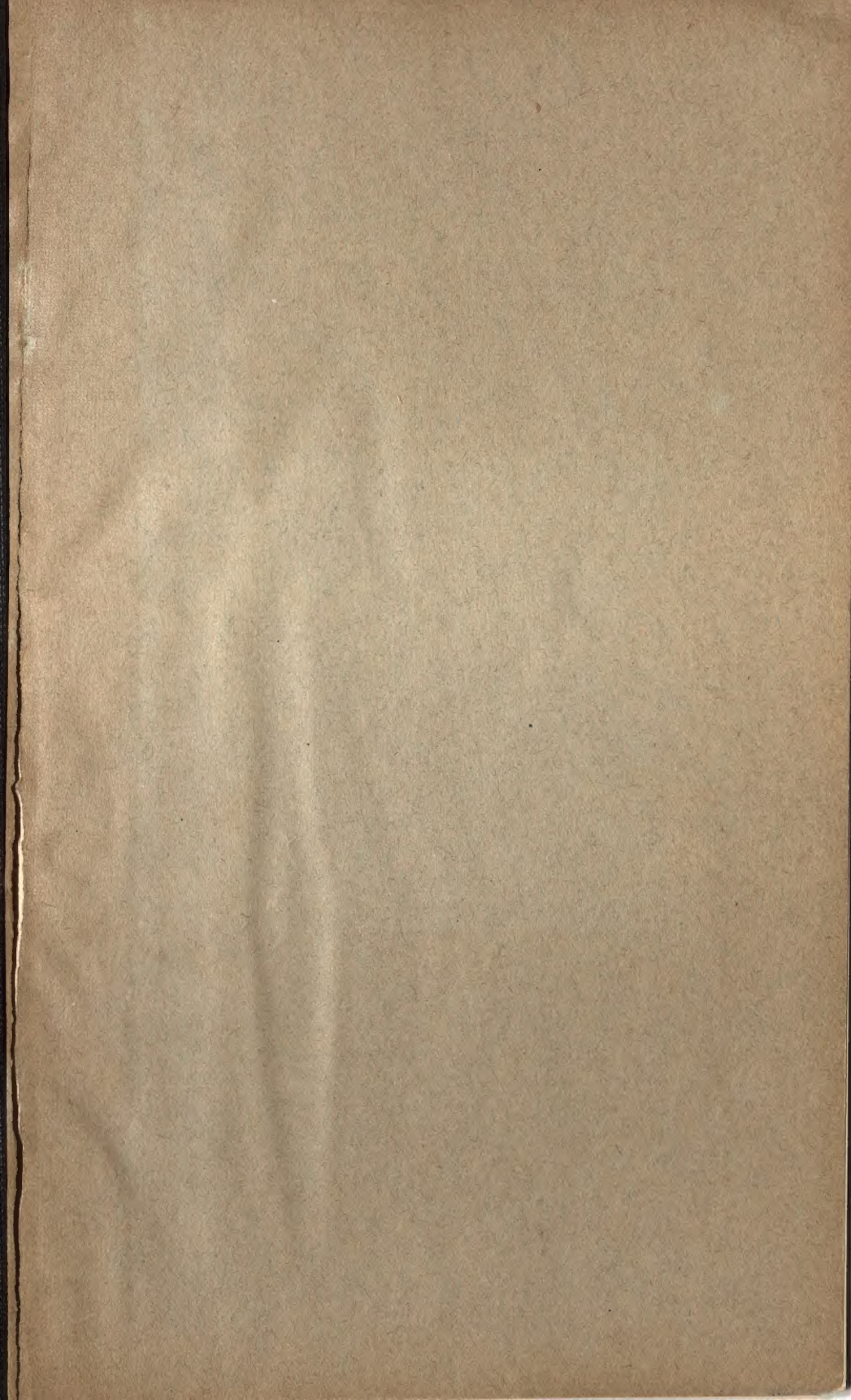
NATURAL HISTORY.

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FOR THE PEOPLE
FOR EDUCATION
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THE AMERICAN MUSEUM
OF
NATURAL HISTORY





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OF NATURAL HISTORY

CEREMONIES

AT THE

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Laying of the Corner Stone

OF THE

AMERICAN MUSEUM

OF

NATURAL HISTORY,

JUNE 2d, 1874.

LIBRARY
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AMERICAN MUSEUM
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CEREMONIES.

PRAYER BY REV. S. H. TYNG, D. D.

O LORD, our God! blessed be Thy great and glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise! Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host,—the earth, and all that is therein,—the seas, and all that therein is, and Thou preservest them all. The host of heaven worshipeth Thee!

Whither shall we go from Thy Spirit, and whither shall we flee from Thy presence? If we ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if we make our bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead us, and Thy right hand shall hold us. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it.

O Lord, our Lord! how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hath set Thy glory above the heavens. When we consider the heavens, the work of Thy hands; the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained—what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet.

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of Thy riches. This great and wide sea also, wherein are creatures innumerable, both small and great; these all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou makest the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herbs for the service of man. Before Thee the mountains break forth in singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands, from the cedar that dwelleth in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop which springeth out of the wall. Thou hast commanded us to commemorate Thy wisdom and Thy power; to teach unto those who come after us the glory of Thy works—as wonderful in the least of the beings that breathes in Thy mercy, as in the mightiest that displays and magnifies Thy power. Thou hast manifested Thyself and Thy wisdom, as truly in the lilies of the field as they grow as in the leviathan, who is the king over all children of pride.

To honor Thee in all these works of Thy hand, would we erect the building over the foundation of which we now ask Thy protection and Thy

blessing. May it perpetuate the remembrance and the study of Thy wisdom and goodness, as all Thy works declare them, and as the knowledge and thankfulness of men thus combine to make them known. Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are all Thy ways, thou King of Saints!

We would humbly, gratefully praise Thee, in all the works of Thy hands and in the wonders of Thy pardoning love to the children of men. May Thy gracious blessing rest upon our beloved country—upon the land which Thou gavest us to inhabit—upon the President of these United States—upon all whom thou hast established in authority among this people. Prosper, we beseech Thee, all our institutions and efforts for the advancement of human learning. Give habits of righteousness and truth to all our people. Uphold and edify every plan for the advancement of public and private virtue, and every effort to reform and rescue the outcast and the neglected among our people.

And above all give peace to our nation—prosperity to Thy Gospel of Salvation—and the maintenance of Thine own supreme authority, in the name and person of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In whose words we would gratefully say,—

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. AMEN.

ADDRESS *by* ROBERT L. STUART, Esq., *President of the Museum, in behalf of the Trustees.*

WE have assembled on this occasion by the invitation of the Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History, to lay the Corner Stone of the generous edifice which, by the wise liberality of the State of New York, has been provided for the perpetual use of the Museum, and, in the appropriate presence of the Chief Magistrates of the City, the State, and the Nation, to dedicate the structure to the public service for which it is designed.

In this view it may not be unbecoming for the Trustees briefly to relate the course of events which have brought this undertaking to its present advancement, and to declare the purposes which have actuated them in the efforts they have made to establish, on a permanent foun-

dation, a Museum which, as they hope, will be worthy of recognition as a National Institution.

It had long been a subject of regret to many citizens interested in the cause of education and culture, that this great city, the most prominent seat of American civilization, should remain entirely destitute of any adequate means for the study of Natural History, while all the other principal branches of science and knowledge found within it their professors and their colleges, which invited students from all parts of the land, and furnished them with suitable facilities for acquiring the special education which they sought. It was also considered that a department of knowledge which has in recent years assumed so large a share of attention and so marked a place in every scheme of Liberal Education, should have in this city a grand collection of specimens, free to the inspection of its own citizens as a source of public amusement, and open to the use of the teachers and scholars of its public and private schools as a means of general instruction.

It was for these purposes that the Legislature of the State of New York, by an Act passed on the 6th of April, 1869, created the Trustees and their successors a body corporate by the name of "The American Museum of Natural History," to be located in the City of New York, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining in said city a Museum and Library of Natural History; of encouraging and developing the study of Natural Science; of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, and to that end of furnishing popular instruction and recreation. Under this Charter the Trustees immediately organized, and have, during the five years which have since elapsed, devoted no inconsiderable amount of time and thought, as well as of money, to carrying into practical operation its useful provisions. Having by their own contributions, and those of many public-spirited citizens who evinced a substantial interest in the project, obtained the necessary means, they purchased the extensive collection of Mammals, Birds, Fishes, etc. belonging to the late Prince Maximilian of Neuwied, the Elliott collection of Birds, besides a large part of the celebrated Verreaux and other collections of specimens of Natural History, and thus found themselves in possession of a suitable nucleus for a complete collection, but without any proper building or place of deposit, where the specimens might be at the same time safely preserved and made available for the popular use and enjoyment. At

this stage in their enterprise, the Trustees, being thus able to furnish a substantial guarantee of their earnest determination to accomplish what they had taken in hand, turned in their hour of need to the Commissioners of the Central Park, who by their uniform devotion to the trusts committed to their care had done so much to advance the welfare and the pleasure of their fellow citizens, and proposed to deposit their collections, for safe keeping and exhibition, within the limits of the Park itself, and add the Museum to the already great attractions of this favorite place of resort. The Trustees were met by the Commissioners with the most enlightened and liberal sympathy, and the proposition was accepted by them with the declaration on the part of the Commissioners, which the event has justified, that the proposed plan of co-operation, which insured and combined in the enterprise the interests and means of the private citizen with those of the public, would probably be made an example and incentive for uniting the energies of those interested in other branches of Science and Art in similar undertakings.

Thus by the favor of the Park Commissioners, at the close of the year in which the Charter of the Museum was granted, its valuable treasures first acquired were deposited and arranged under the protection of the People, in the Arsenal building in the Park, according to written articles of agreement, by which, although remaining the inviolable property of this private corporation, they were secured and preserved for the free instruction and enjoyment of all who chose to visit them.

From that time to the present the Trustees acknowledge with gratitude the untiring sympathy and co-operation of the Commissioners and their successors in the Department of Public Parks, by means of which the public has been enabled to enjoy the full benefit of all which the Trustees have succeeded in acquiring. The fact that the rooms which were allotted to the use of the Museum have been visited daily by thousands of all ages and classes, and that the public interest in its success has steadily and rapidly increased, is a satisfactory proof of the wisdom of that joint arrangement.

It very soon however became evident by the rapid growth of the Museum, and the constant additions which accrued to its collections, that the temporary accommodations which were the best that the Park Commissioners have thus far been able to afford, were altogether

inadequate for the purpose to which they were devoted, and accordingly the Legislature, in response to the Petition of a large number of influential Citizens interested in the cause, by an Act in 1871 relative to the Department of Public Parks, authorized the Commissioners to erect upon Manhattan Square, a suitable fire-proof building for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the Museum therein, under rules and regulations to be prescribed from time to time by the Commissioners, and in the same connection and by the same act the like provision was made for a similar building for the use of "The Metropolitan Museum of Art," the foundations of which are already being prepared by the Commissioners on the opposite side of the Park.

By this double act of munificence on the part of the people of the State, the City of New York has been endowed with two institutions of education and ornament which, though now in their infancy, will at no distant day be recognized as of great and permanent public advantage, and whatever jealousy may justly pertain to appropriations of public money to private uses can in no way apply to this Museum of Natural History. Its Trustees have no personal objects to serve—no private ends to accomplish. They can gain nothing for themselves from this or from any future endowments which the wise policy of the Legislature may furnish to carry out and perfect this undertaking. Their aims will be all attained, if the people of the City shall justly appreciate its value, and if its accumulating treasures shall be freely and wisely used by all who seek them.

We should not do entire justice to this occasion if we failed to record the gratitude of the Trustees and the community, to one eminent citizen whose memory is still fresh with us, and will long be kept green by the perennial growth of the charities which he founded and sustained.

To JOHN DAVID WOLFE, the first President of this Museum, we are much indebted for its successful establishment. He entered with zeal into the project of its creation, believing that it would prove an honor to his native City, and an important means of education to its citizens and their children, and dying at a ripe old age, he commended its care and support to those who have the means and the disposition to do something for the public welfare.

In recalling, with pride, the progress that has already been made towards the realization of their plans, the Trustees desire to place on

record their high appreciation of the services of Professor ALBERT S. BICKMORE, whose zealous devotion to the interests of the Institution, and untiring industry in carrying out the wishes of the Executive Committee, have done much to advance the prosperity of the Museum.

We lay here to-day the Corner Stone of an edifice which shall be dedicated forever to the study and the culture of Natural History. These massive foundations already securely laid give promise of the most solid permanence in the superstructure. The wise forethought of the Park Commission, in reserving for the future use of the Museum the remainder of Manhattan Square, has provided amply for its continued growth.

The presence on this occasion of the President of the United States, who has kindly consented to assist us in these ceremonies, assures us of that public interest which is necessary to sustain the undertaking.

The cheering words of the Governor will doubtless lend the countenance of the State to support this institution which has been founded by its bounty, and finally, the Trustees, in pledging once more their own efforts for its success, would bespeak for it that popular favor without which it must surely languish and decay.

The Hon. H. G. STEBBINS, President of the Department of Parks, spoke as follows :

When the arrangements for the celebration of the ceremony which has brought us here to-day were made, the duty was assigned to the Hon. SALEM H. WALES, then President of the Park Commission, to represent the Department on this important occasion. He has since then resigned his office as Commissioner and gone abroad. It devolves upon me to perform the duty which he had expected to fulfill.

As he had prepared an Address for this occasion I shall take the liberty of reading it, and of expressing my sincere regret that he is not here to carry out the programme we had agreed upon. Mr. WALES, in that case, would have said—

The Legislature of the State of New York, at its session of 1864, placed Manhattan Square, a piece of property belonging to the City, situate between 77th and 81st streets and 8th and 9th avenues, consisting of about 19 acres, under the control and management of the

Commissioners of the Central Park ; and it was made the duty of the Board to enclose, lay out, grade, regulate, drain and improve the same ; and by subsequent enactment in 1868 the Board was authorized to erect, establish, conduct and maintain on the Central Park, a Meteorological and Astronomical Observatory, a Museum of Natural History and a Gallery of Art, and the buildings therefor, and to accept gifts, devises and bequests upon suitable conditions.

Although the Board of Commissioners was thus early clothed with ample authority to establish within the Park a variety of museums that would afford the means of popular cultivation and innocent recreation, yet they have felt that, to insure the proper management of such institutions, it would be better to leave them to the care of private associations than for the Board to expend public money in the purchase of specimens of Natural History or works of Art ; and in giving encouragement to private organizations, the Board made known at its outset that not only the object of the Association must be approved, but its sound organization and undoubted ability to command the means necessary to accomplish its purposes according to a high standard of excellence, must be first demonstrated. It was, therefore, with feelings of great satisfaction, that the Commissioners, on the 30th of December, 1868, received a letter from a number of well-known citizens, inquiring if the Board was disposed to provide for the reception and development of a Museum of Natural History.

In reply to this letter the Comptroller of the Park wrote, that "the Commissioners will very gladly receive the Collection to which you allude, and will use their best exertions toward the establishment of a Museum of Natural History of an extent and excellence in all its departments that will be creditable to the City ; and in their efforts toward the development of such an institution, the Commissioners of the Park will highly esteem your valuable co-operation."

In pursuance of the authority vested in the Commissioners of the Central Park, and in accordance with suitable rules and regulations, the building known as the Arsenal, situate on the east side of the Park, was carefully fitted up and arranged for the temporary reception and proper exhibition of a rare and most valuable collection of objects of Natural History, which had been gathered under the patronage of the American Museum of Natural History—a society composed of some of our most public-spirited citizens, and offering every guarantee

of the successful accomplishment of the object for which they were incorporated.

Such has been the zeal and earnestness displayed by this Society in the prosecution of its work, that the space already allotted in the Arsenal building is now wholly inadequate for the proper display of their precious Collections, and the Department of Public Parks has determined to construct a much more extensive edifice, which in its general design and purpose should equal the largest museums of the Old World. We are here to-day to lay the Corner Stone of such an edifice, and as the representative on this occasion of the Department of Public Parks, I take great pleasure in assuring the Trustees and the friends of the Society of the great interest felt by the Commissioners in the success of this worthy enterprise. To the stranger who comes here to-day these rugged foundation walls and these rough surroundings are not well calculated to make a pleasant impression; but to us who have watched the rapid growth northward of this city, and who were familiar with the barren and rocky ground upon which the Central Park has been created, it requires but little strain upon the imagination to conceive of the speedy occupation of all these vacant lots by substantial dwellings, and to picture to ourselves the spot upon which we now stand, known as Manhattan Square, as covered by the proposed Museum of Natural History, costing, ere its final completion, not less than \$6,000,000, and embracing a collection of objects of scientific interest second to none other in the world. As a people we are sometimes accused of excessive practical and money-making characteristics; and it cannot be denied that in all the varied arts and appliances which minister to the material progress of mankind we have shown remarkable energy. The Patent Office at Washington is a stately monument that bears witness to the patient genius which has wrought out the wonderful inventions now so largely employed in all the busy affairs of the country; and while it is true that mechanical and agricultural fairs and exhibitions have extended their good influences throughout every State and county in the land, it must be acknowledged that the same attention has not been given to the collection of objects of Natural History, of which our country has almost an infinite variety.

With the acquisition of wealth and the introduction of ease and luxury in the homes of the rich, there comes most naturally the

enlarged and more noble thought of doing something not only to amuse, but also to instruct the people.

The subject of museums is beginning to assume new importance in the estimation of the people.

Hitherto, small and comparatively worthless collections have been gathered by private enterprise, and employed chiefly for purposes of speculation. That which is temporary and speculative must now give way to something more enduring and instructive, and it seems to me that our thanks are especially due to the Society of Natural History for acting the part of pioneers in this great field of science, and for the zeal which they have shown in the prosecution of the work. So far as the Department which I now represent is concerned, I do not hesitate to promise all the assistance it can lawfully render. We encourage it as not only an object of public interest which shall serve to attract hitherward strangers from all parts of the land, but also as a means of intellectual pleasure, profit and relief to our over-burdened people, and as affording a school where the children of the rich and poor alike can come to study the wonders of nature which are here to be gathered together, and freely exposed for the common benefit of all. It is believed that the museums on the Park will become valuable auxiliaries of that great free public educational system which is already the pride of our city, as well as the source of useful practical information to agriculturists, merchants and manufacturers throughout the land. In this country we popularize knowledge, and give to science a holiday air, and instead of putting our collections, as some have proposed, "into cold catacombs of science, and long gloomy galleries in which nature is classified, ticketed, stuffed and covered with dust in a manner well adapted to create weariness rather than to attract people to the study of natural objects," it is our purpose to provide such structures as shall furnish agreeable entertainment to the general visitor, while at the same time offering valuable aid to common school education.

With the hearty co-operation of the Natural History Society, sustained by the genius of Olmsted and the architectural skill of Vaux, and certain of the sympathy of an enlightened people, the Department of Public Parks looks confidently forward to the successful completion of the magnificent scheme, the commencement of which may now be pronounced as fully inaugurated.

What Mr. WALES has said, and I have just read, will convey a full conception of the purposes of the structure which is formally begun to-day. I feel it to be a great honor to assist in the commencement of a work which will, I trust, be hastened to completion before the Centennial of our Independence; here to stand as a magnificent memorial of what our City has been able to accomplish under free institutions, and to become a part of the material resources that will ultimately go to the creation, around this Park, of the home of a National University.

What nobler exhibitions could be given of the crowning achievements of this municipality than those which this Museum and its sister institution, the Art Gallery, will afford? This peerless pleasure ground for the people, which will proudly boast of these twin jewels as its legitimate offspring, will contain within itself in miniature the records of the progress of the country. Its wilderness spots remain as souvenirs of what the whole tract was a few short years ago—when a prophetic SAMUEL B. RUGGLES saw the possibilities that are now accomplished facts. Its artistic decorations and its Museums of Art and Natural History will show the best results of a high civilization, and of a liberality directed by the wisest forethought and the most cultured taste.

ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR DIX.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

I did not come here with the expectation of addressing you. You may find it difficult to believe what I say when you see me present, and my name in the published order of exercises as a speaker. But, I can assure you, that I had no intimation from any quarter that such a service was expected of me, and no knowledge that such a notice had been given to the public until I saw the programme a day or two ago, by pure accident. I only say this to exonerate myself from the possible imputation of having made an engagement and failed to perform it; and to tender to you an apology which I am sure you will, under the circumstances, deem a valid one, for respecting in the most summary manner to your kindness and courtesy.

I am very much gratified to be with you on an occasion of so much interest. It is pleasant to stand amid this brilliant assemblage of beauty and fashion, and of those solid qualities, by which the welfare and prosperity of cities and communities are wrought out. It is pleas-

ant to see a great metropolitan city like this, casting aside for the moment the habiliments of its industry, to lay the foundation of a Museum in which the dead past is to be linked to the living present; to be followed as we trust, at no distant day, by a repository of art, where the ages that have gone by may be kept in our remembrance, by gathering together the memorials of their achievements; where the stately march of Empires may be chronicled to some extent, by the exhibition of what they have done for social embellishment, and where the gorgeousness and profusion of Nature may be emulated by the creative genius of Art.

I know no locality so suitable as this, for such a Museum of artistic treasure; no locality in which Art has already done so much for Nature. Most of us remember when, but a few years ago, this whole district, which now forms the Central Park, was an unsightly and shapely mass—"rudis indigestaque moles." Now it is a very miracle of rural beauty, where the most unpromising and stubborn natural feature has been made to blend and harmonize with the general aspect of order and grace.

But, ladies and gentlemen, I am forgetting that I only arose to apologise to you for sitting down again; and if I go on, you may impute to me the common frailty which Horace ascribes to singers—that they can never be induced to sing when they are asked, and never stop when nobody wants to hear them. But I cannot sit down without saying, it is appropriate that the foundation of this Cosmopolitan Museum should be laid by the foremost man of our time, who in the field did so much by his calm, unconquerable and unconscious valor, to save the life of the nation, and who in the Cabinet stands forth as its fearless champion, to maintain its honor and its plighted faith.

ADDRESS OF PROF. JOSEPH HENRY.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

My address will have one element which I doubt not will elicit your approbation. I was requested to limit it to ten minutes, and therefore it will of necessity have the merit especially appreciated on

a warm day, that of shortness. Being thus instructed as to time, I trust I shall be excused if I do not as fully develop as could be wished the several propositions which I intend to present in connection with the interesting occasion on which we are assembled. The first of these propositions is that modern civilization tends to congregate the population of countries into large cities, that cities tend to increase more rapidly than the general population. These effects may be referred to two causes, first, the education of the working classes, and secondly, to the introduction of labor-saving machines. These causes are notably illustrated in New England, where the masses are more highly educated than in any other part of the world. No sooner does the young New-Englander approach manhood, after having enjoyed the benefits of a common school education, than he abandons the plow and the spade and hurries to the city or the manufacturing village to obtain more intellectual and less toilsome employment. The vacuum which is thus produced is, however, more than filled by the invention, it may be by the same individual, of patent machines actuated by steam or horse-power, which will do, in many cases, a hundred fold more work in a given time than the man himself could accomplish. Another proposition to which I would call your attention is that cities in proportion to their extent and rapidity of growth engender habits of thought and of action of a character the reverse of progress, and which, if unrestrained, would tend to disintegrate society and resolve it into its primitive barbarous elements; that these principles are eminently applicable in New York, which, including the whole population at the mouth of the Hudson, is now a vast city, and is destined to become, I say it without hesitation, the largest city in the world; no other city having so large a country tributary to it in the richest productions of the soil and mine, and no other city so favorably situated in regard to geography and topography to secure these tributaries perpetually to itself. There are in fact but two outlets for water communication from the immense region of the basin of the Mississippi, namely, that along the river itself into the Gulf of Mexico near New-Orleans and that along the great lakes and the Hudson, terminating at New-York in the Atlantic Ocean.

It is therefore of the first importance that those who possess the intelligence, the influence, and the power, who from the experience of the past are impressed with the tendencies as to the future, should

endeavor to provide all the means possible to avert evils similar to those with which this city has been afflicted, and which tend to afflict it in a still greater degree in the future.

Among these means I would of course place in the first rank a liberal support of the Christian minister and the Christian missionary, but the labors of these may be greatly aided by whatever tends to neutralize the intensified selfishness engendered by the struggle in a large city for supremacy, and the unfavorable effort of extreme exclusion from intercourse with nature, and above all, the ready indulgence of degrading passions. This is especially the province of museums of art and nature. They not only offer a substitute for immoral gratifications by supplying intellectual pleasures, but may also be rendered sources of moral and even religious instruction. The establishment, the beginning of which we are about to inaugurate is, in accordance with the views we have presented, worthy of the enterprise and intelligence of those who conceived and who have thus far developed it. It is to be a temple of nature in which the productions of the inorganic and organic world, together with the remnants of the past ages of the human family are to be collected, classified, and properly exhibited. It is to be rendered an attractive exhibition which shall arrest the attention of the most unobserving of those who, having been confined all their lives to the city, have come to consider edifices of brick and of stone as the most prominent objects of the physical world.

We have learned from the interesting address of the President of the Museum, that already large collections of specimens in natural history and ethnology have been secured. But such a collection, however well arranged and interestingly displayed, is still wanting in an essential element of higher usefulness. I allude to the spiritual part of its constitution, to the controlling, intellectual, and moral soul which shall direct its operations and instruct the multitudes who may flock to the exhibition for amusement or the gratification of mere curiosity, in a craving for novelties. How incomparably greater would the importance of this museum be were there connected with it a professor, who at stated periods of the year would give courses of free lectures on the objects which it contains, who would expound the laws of the phenomena of nature, who would point out the operations of that mysterious principle called life, who would discourse upon the changes the world has undergone during geological periods, and who would

reconstruct the history of man in primitive times from the remnants of his previous existence which have been gathered in this institution.

For example, what an effect would be produced on thousands of the inhabitants of this vast city if it were announced that an Agassiz, filled with enthusiastic sympathy with his subject and his audience, and capable of mingling moral considerations with scientific principles, of directing attention from nature to nature's God, of not only enlightening the heads, but of warming the hearts of his audience, were to give free courses of instruction.

Such an announcement would be hailed with intense interest by thousands, and the amphitheater of the museum would be crowded to overflowing with receptive and admiring auditors. I need only suggest such an arrangement to find, I doubt not, an appreciation of its importance in every one of my hearers, and the hope felt or expressed that the directors of this establishment will endeavor to provide an endowment for the support of such a feature of the museum. But I have not yet done. The development of the institution would not yet be complete were it even furnished with all the appliances I have mentioned. There is still another duty which this city owes to itself and to the civilized world; I allude to an endowment for the support of a college of discoverers, of a series of men capable not only of expounding established truths but of interrogating nature and of discovering new facts, new phenomena, and new principles. The blindness of the public to the value of abstract science and to the importance of endowments for its advancement is truly remarkable. No country in the world is so much indebted for its progress in power and intelligence to science than ours, and yet no country does so little to encourage or advance it. Nearly all that is done in this line, is by professors in colleges, badly paid, and generally overworked. It is not every one, however well educated, that is capable of becoming a first-class scientist; like the poet, the discoverer is born, not made, and when one of this class has been found he should be cherished, liberally provided with the means of subsistence, fully supplied with all the implements of investigation, and his life consecrated to the high and holy office of penetrating the mysteries of nature. What has been achieved in the knowledge of the forces and operations of nature and the use to which this knowledge has been applied in controlling and directing these forces to useful purposes, constitutes the highest claim to glory of our

race. Yet it is a melancholy fact that, notwithstanding the reputation for wealth and intelligence possessed by our people, for the only institution intended especially for the advancement of science in this country we are indebted to a foreigner, James Smithson, and that a very large portion of the income of this has wrongfully been devoted to the erection of a costly edifice and the embellishment of grounds, and expenditures on other local objects unnecessary for the realization of the intentions of the founder. I am happy, however, to say that after 25 years of incessant efforts in one line by the directors, Congress has at length been induced to indicate an intention of redressing the evil, and enabling the establishment to devote its whole energies to the advance of science, the evident design of the testator. New York at present is the wealthiest, most powerful, and influential city of the Union, and is destined in the future to be more so. But do not be offended with me if I say in perfect candor and with the desire of doing good, that it has done less than any other city, in proportion to its means, to advance science. More than 75 years ago, Boston established the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which, annually ever since, has given to the world the result of original labors in the way of new discoveries.

Philadelphia before the revolution, under the auspices of Franklin, established the American Philosophical Society, which has still a vigorous existence, and continues to annually send its transactions to foreign societies in exchange for theirs. New-York, also, more than 50 years ago, commenced to establish a Philosophical Society, which expired, however, in giving birth to a single memoir by De Witt Clinton on the importance and value of such an establishment. It is also true that among so many people there have been some who have been zealously devoted to science, and have done honor to it and the world, such as a Redfield (I speak only of the dead), who established the laws of storms, and a Torrey, who devoted an unobtrusive, industrious and productive life, to the advance of chemistry, mineralogy, and botany. Boast not of wealth, nor of refinement, while original powers of intellect, the choicest gift of heaven to man, is at a discount among you. I appeal to the millionaires of this city, if any one of them is desirous of perpetuating his name and of living in the memory of mankind long after he has departed this life, to endow, connected with the Park Museum, a College of Discoveries, with the additional

means of printing and disseminating over the world the results of its labors. I refer him to the effects which are being produced in regard to the name of James Smithson, a scion of one of the noble houses of England, who rightfully anticipated that through the endowment of his institution his name would live in the history of mankind when the titles of his proud ancestors were extinct or forgotten. Every year a publication is issued from this institution, filled with an account of new discoveries made under its auspices, which is distributed to more than 2,000 foreign institutions. This publication, bearing the name of Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, thus renders the name of the founder ubiquitous with continual repetitions, until now, it has become as familiar as a household word in every part of the civilized world. What, in comparison to this, are local monuments, pyramids of flint, statues of brass, or obelisks of marble? These are seen but by the few and are constantly subjected to the slow but sure destroyer, time; while the other is everywhere present, and is as enduring as civilization itself. The operations of the universe are unlimited, and in the great book of nature, man has scarcely read more than the title-page or the preface. It was the saying of La Place, "What we know is nothing; what we do not know is immense; indeed every advance of knowledge but enlarges the sphere of our ignorance." How many problems of the highest interest are pressing upon us even in the line of biology. What is vitality? Is it an unintelligent force of nature, like that of attraction, producing crystallization, or an intelligent principle operating by the ordinary forces of nature, producing results indicating design and consequent intention? Can dead matter be made alive under the influence of certain conditions without propagation from parents—this is a question which cannot be solved *a priori*, and must wait the decision of refined experiments. It has been reduced to a fact that either every breath of air we inhale, that every portion of the earth's atmosphere, is teeming with the germs of living organisms, or that dead matter may spring into life in accordance with the process of what is called spontaneous generation. In science every advance in the way of discovery gives us a higher point of view for making excursions into the regions of the unknown, and the man of science, however extended his vision, however multiplied his resources, can never want for worlds to conquer.

God has created man in his own intellectual image, and graciously

permitted him to study His modes of operation, and rewards his industry in this line by giving him powers and instruments which affect in the highest degree his material welfare. It was the recognition of the importance of original science that rendered France a few years ago the center of civilization of the world. The celebrated Museum, called the Garden of Plants, was not a museum, as it were, of dead specimens for the gratification of ordinary curiosity, but the theatre of the labors of a Cuvier, a St. Hilaire, and of the many distinguished men which have rendered the scientific annals of that country immortal.

Germany owes her ascendancy at the present day not only to the general education of her people, but to the means which she has provided for the discovery of new truths.

England is becoming awakened to the importance of the same object, and a portion of the immense income of her universities is now devoted to the support of original investigators.

With the hope that you will excuse the plainness of some of my remarks, and attribute them to my ardor for the advancement of knowledge, and a desire to stimulate the inhabitants of this city to efforts in the line in which I am most interested, rather than to a tendency to indulge in depreciation or cynical criticism, I must close my address and throw myself upon your indulgence for having involuntarily, as it were, exceeded the limit of my time.

At the conclusion of Professor HENRY'S address, the Superintendent of the Museum read the following list of articles in the box to be placed in the corner stone :

1. Reports and Circulars of the Museum.
2. Reports of the Dep't of Public Parks for 1870, 1871 and 1872.
3. Manual of the State Legislature.
4. Congressional Directory.

5. Daily Papers—the “New York Tribune,” “Times,” “World,” “Herald,” “Sun,” “Evening Post,” “Mail,” “Express,” “Commercial Advertiser,” “Journal of Commerce,” “Staats-Zeitung,” and the “Courier de Etats-Unis,” “Appleton’s Journal,” “Harper’s Weekly Illustrated Paper,” and “Frank Leslie’s Weekly Illustrated Paper.”

6. One Dollar and fractional parts in currency.

One Dollar and fractional parts in coin.

The Treasurer deposited the Box in the CORNER STONE, which was then laid by

HIS EXCELLENCY

GEN’L U. S. GRANT,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

The exercises closed with a Benediction pronounced by the Rev. HENRY C. POTTER, D. D.

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